

**VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES FROM JULY 23, 2010**

The following are Minutes from the second meeting of the Veterans Memorial Committee held in the Mayor's Conference Room at City Hall on Friday, July 23, 2010 at 7:30 am

**Volunteers in attendance:**

Chairman Mike Goergen, Barbara Bender, Frank Cardarelle, Jason Christiaansen, Justin Kieffer, Bob Kojetin, Herbert Lefler, John Lonsbury, Robert Reed, Marshall Schwartz

**Volunteers unable to attend:**

Jack Abrahamson

**Guests:**

Dennis W. Schulstad, Brigadier General, USAF, Retired and State Chair Emeritus, ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve)

**Staff in attendance:**

John Keprios, Edina Park and Recreation Department Director  
Janet Canton, Edina Park and Recreation Office Coordinator

**I. Dennis W. Schulstad, Brigadier General, USAF, Retired and State Chair Emeritus, ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve) –**

Brigadier General Dennis Schulstad, USAF Retired and State Chair Emeritus ESGR, has been very active in various groups and projects that have involved veterans. He shared with the committee some of the highlights as well as the pros and cons on some of the projects he has worked on in the past.

Mr. Schulstad indicated that he worked on what is now the "Veterans Tribute Wall" located at the University of Minnesota TCF Bank Stadium. The committee of the project consisted of a group of top leaders of every veteran group in Minnesota. He noted that, because the new stadium could not be named "Memorial Stadium" (in honor of WWI Veterans) like the old stadium, they decided to build the Veterans Tribute Wall which contains both the American Flag and the Minnesota flag; there is also room for other flags. He pointed out that the wording they used wasn't just for WWI vets (like the old stadium) but included all veterans past, current and future.

Mr. Schulstad explained that this group was also taxed with raising the money to build it and also to work with the architects on the design. He noted they needed to raise approximately \$500,000 and they ended up raising \$680,000. He pointed out that to start they looked at selling bricks or selling names on a plaque or something like that, unfortunately they could not do that because they would have been competing with a lot of other things going on at that time. He indicated that what he ended up doing was he hit up 15 people and was able to get the money. Two of them were corporate and the rest were private donations, so it was very successful doing it that way.

Mr. Schulstad indicated that another project he worked on was making a statue of George Mikan at the Target Center and estimated it to cost approximately \$75,000 to \$100,000 to do. He stated that he contacted several people and was able to get ten \$10,000 grants. He noted that since it was

so quick and easy to do they decided to continue to raise more money. He explained that they ended up working a Juvenile Diabetes Foundation called Maxi Fund and anything they raised above their cost they would give to the Maxi Fund Foundation. They were able to raise \$600,000. He pointed out that the reason they did this is because with the initial money they raised for the statue was not tax deductible; however, once they decided to continue to raise money if they tied it in with a charitable 501C3 foundation the donations they raised would be tax deductible. He stressed that it's very important to establish some type of method to make all donations tax deductible.

Mr. Schulstad indicated that the committee will need to decide if they want to go after a few big sponsors to help pay for it or go after a lot of \$100 donations to pay for it. He noted that you can do it either way and there's a very good case that can be made either way. However, it's a very important decision that needs to be made early on.

Mr. Schulstad stated that the third group he worked with was the "Minnesota Military Appreciation Fund". He noted that it is an organization that raises money to give to every man or woman from Minnesota who has served either active duty or been on the reserves who have served in combat after 911, a check for \$500. If they are wounded they can get up to \$20,000. He added that the most important thing is they get a letter of appreciation from the people of Minnesota, not from the taxpayers, the government or the military, but the people of Minnesota making a donation thanking them for their service. Mr. Schulstad pointed out that they wanted to do something for their major donors and to recognize the entire effort so they went to Fort Snelling where they have plaques on the wall. He noted that the plaque talks about all of the sacrifices made by the men and women who have served in the military and then lists all of the different supporters all the way from one million dollars down to \$10,000. He commented that so far they have raised 11 million dollars and are the only state in America to do this. Mr. Schulstad explained that this is a 501C3 and they have gone out to individuals to raise money but they have also had four major fundraisers to raise money for it so that is also something to think about.

Mr. Schulstad indicated that he has been involved in a lot of things along the way. He noted that in Crystal they have a beautiful Veterans Memorial in their cemetery. He explained there are five different granite walls overlooking a lake that has an atrium in front of it. He stated that is where the names are listed and he believes for \$300 or \$400 you can have your name and recognize someone who was a war veteran listed.

Mr. Keprios asked Mr. Schulstad where he would suggest they start to look for sources for grants. Mr. Schulstad replied one place to look at is there are several pretty good size defense contractors in Minnesota. He noted that a good place to start would be with what is called "Minnesota Defense Alliance". He noted that another thing to do is just talk to plain personal contacts.

Mr. Schulstad commented that how to motivate people to be financially involved is an interesting process. A lot of people want to know what they will get if they donate money such as their name in big letters on a plaque. To some people that means a tremendous amount and to other people they don't care if their name is mentioned. He added that some people won't even make a donation if their name isn't mentioned and for a lot of corporate donations it's very important that their name is mentioned.

Mr. Keprios asked Mr. Schulstad if he would suggest that they have a plan in place first before they start knocking on doors to which he replied yes.

Mr. Keprios asked Mr. Schulstad for his thoughts on statues and should it be neutral on gender, should they have an eagle instead, should they have all branches of the military represented, etc. Mr. Schulstad replied that those are all of the same discussions they had. He pointed out that he doesn't suggest they inscribe names because someone is always going to get left off and it's very difficult to add later. However, if names are used do not put them in alphabetical order because it will be obvious if you forget someone and add them later. Mr. Schulstad advised the committee that whatever it is they decide to do that they need to keep it simple. There is no right or wrong answer. However, he really thinks it's important that this is from the community.

Mr. Keprios asked Mr. Schulstad if he thinks there are any elements in the design that they should pay attention to, what's really important. Mr. Schulstad replied again to keep it simple and suggests not listing any names. Secondly, he thinks it's very important to have the American flag. Mr. Keprios asked if they were to use three flags which three would he suggest. Mr. Schulstad responded that if he were to do the U of M one again he would put all of the flags in a cluster with the American flag taller and two other flag poles and those could be used for POW's, City of Edina, or if you wanted the State of Minnesota. Have a cluster of flags with the American flag in the middle as the largest one; he pointed out that if you leave the flags up they are supposed to have 24 hour lighting on them which is a big cost item.

Mr. Lonsbury asked about ongoing maintenance because he is worried what are they going to do 50 years from now. How do they fund or provide for the future and hand off from building to maintenance. Mr. Schulstad replied that at the U of M there is extra money sitting at the University Foundation that is there for improvements, flag replacements, repairs, etc. He stated that for the George Mikan statue they didn't do anything extra and that is a concern as to what will happen when the statue needs cleaning as well as who owns it. If they decide to redo the place will it be moved or put in the junk because they really don't know who owns it. These are a couple of mistakes they made.

Mr. Lonsbury indicated that he is thinking if they do any engravings or anything like that they are committing future generations to add or keep up all of the rest of it. Mr. Schulstad commented that money should be set aside because chances are a mistake will be made or there may be vandalism so you need to think about repairing vandalism.

Mr. Keprios indicated that one of the things they are looking at is putting the names of those killed in action who were Edina residents on the monument. He asked Mr. Schulstad if it would be his suggestion to not do that or to at least leave space to add names that were missed. Mr. Schulstad noted that is exactly the reason you would put names randomly and not in alphabetical order so that adding a name is not too difficult and will not look like one was forgotten in the process. Unfortunately, there will probably be another war so there will be additional names added later. Mr. Schulstad pointed out that if they decide to have names listed of those killed in action they need to have very definite requirements because you do not want the committee deciding whether or not certain people should be included or not included. It needs to be black and white as to what is considered killed in action. It's a difficult thing to do so you need to make it as simple as you possibly can.

Ms. Bender noted that she likes the idea of being simple and just keeping specific names to a minimum or having them perhaps in a small enclosure in a book like at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the State Capital they do have the wall but they also have an enclosed book and maybe the committee would like to do something like that for names rather than having them etched in stone. Mr. Schulstad stated that he would personally discourage the committee from

listing names because it's very difficult to do. If you do decide to do it, it's important to establish the criteria before you even begin.

Mr. Schulstad pointed out that a lot of people are not going to give you money unless they know it's going to happen. He noted that the majority of people will always ask "who else has given?"

It was noted that it's assumed that the memorial is going to belong to the City of Edina and is owned by the City of Edina. The city will pay for the lights and will keep it maintained.

Ms. Bender asked Mr. Schulstad if he has ever seen documents that were dedicated to the Veterans but was also with the theme of freedom. She noted that sometimes she thinks we don't really appreciate just how much freedom we have. Mr. Schulstad replied that's a great idea because that's what it's all about.

It was asked of Mr. Schulstad that in all of the projects he has worked on did he ever feel they wasted too much time focusing on something minute. Mr. Schulstad responded he would have spent more time with the sculptor instead of just saying we trust you. Secondly, having lack of ownership there needs to be some kind of contract as to who owns it.

Mr. Cardarelle noted that his concern is he wants it to be an everlasting memorial for at least the next 200 years. He wants to see it continue to honor the veterans all the way from the Revolutionary War all the way to 100 years from now. He commented that he thinks the actual design needs to be something for the future as much as the past.

## **II. STANDING COMMITTEES**

It was noted that they are still looking for someone to volunteer to be the chair or co-chair of the Fundraising Committee.

Mr. Lonsbury stated that he thinks the Marketing Committee should also include Community Relations because he thinks there is going to be a lot of politics regarding this and they should be thinking about that up front. Mr. Lonsbury noted that he also thinks the Fundraising Chair could also be the Treasurer and that the two could be combined.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he would strongly recommend that Bob Benson be included as a committee member. Mr. Keprios indicated that it was his understanding that he wanted to be a project volunteer and not a committee member. Mr. Keprios indicated they would welcome Mr. Benson if he wants to be a committee member. He noted that they received a few applications where people wanted to help out but couldn't commit to actually being on the committee.

## **III. SITE SELECTION**

Mr. Reed indicated that before they can begin to get an idea they really need to zero in on a site. Mr. Goergen stated that they are relying a lot on staff and right now staff's forerunner is Utley Park. Mr. Keprios stated that they need to have a comprehensive process for site selection and show that we have exercised proper due diligence. He noted in his view he thinks there are three sites they should consider: Utley Park, Centennial Lakes Park and Arneson Acres. Mr. Kojetin suggested adding Williams Park as a consideration.

Mr. Schwartz noted that he was at the State Capital this past week and the thing that struck him was there was no shade. He commented that he thinks there is a real dignity at Utley Park because it

already has big trees that would take years to try and grow and with the shade it encourages people to stay and to think.

Mr. Lonsbury stated that he thinks they first need to figure out what their criteria are for selecting a site. Are they looking for more of a park location or are they looking with more of a reflecting area. Do they want to have lots of sun, be near water, etc.

Mr. Goergen indicated when this originally came about in January as a proposal to the Park Board they wanted a dignified memorial to the veterans and possibly include those who were killed in action. They wanted it to be a place for reflection and that's when they started thinking it would be nice to have water running through it, a nice wooded area and perhaps putting in some benches. He added that one other thing he had talked about is it would be nice if it could serve as a centerpiece or backdrop for memorial services. Mr. Keprios commented to find a balance between being highly visible, aesthetically pleasing and yet a quiet place for reflection is a tough balance. He added that he does think shade is a nice thing to throw into the mix. Mr. Keprios stated that utility wise he thinks it's wise to have parking close by so that it's easily accessible. Also, something with restrooms would also be important.

Mr. Lonsbury commented that it sounds like they are looking for quiet reflection, public ceremonies, parking, visibility, shade and restrooms.

Mr. Keprios made the point should they find a site that accommodates the size of the memorial or do they fit the memorial to the size of the site? He noted that which comes first has to be considered. Mr. Cardarelle commented he thinks it's going to be awfully hard to compete with other sites against Utley Park.

Mr. Keprios stated that he still likes what Mr. Lonsbury said in that he thinks we ought to consider Arneson Acres and Centennial Lakes and as Mr. Kojetin suggested Williams Park. Mr. Goergen indicated that he thinks all of the committee members should individually look at all four sites and keep in mind the criteria mentioned. He noted it will be put on the agenda for the next meeting and possibly they will be able to make their decision.

Mr. Schwartz suggested that at the next meeting they try to establish criteria if they decide they are going to list people who were killed in action. They need to identify who would qualify and who wouldn't because it wouldn't make sense for him to put a lot work and research into it if they decide they are not going to list names.

Meeting adjourned.